

Caring for the Poor at Christmas Time



SALVATION ARMY WOMEN HANDING OUT CHRISTMAS DINNERS AT THE ARMY STORE—Photo by a Staff Artist.

AT NO time of all the year is misfortune more pathetic nor when it appeals more irresistibly to the fortunate than during the holidays. Perhaps this is because the wretchedness and sorrow of the world are more apparent by contrast with the happiness and prosperity now everywhere evident, or that, mellowed by the realization of our own blessings, we are more sensitive to what the other half has missed, but be that as it may, if the city's poor never has enough to eat or to wear at any other time of the year, or any other means of knowing that it sometimes enters into the consideration of the others, it is assured not only of the necessities but of many of the luxuries as well, on the two great days, Christmas and New Year's, with a liberal sprinkling during the intervening week, if it will only make its wants known. In fact, so generally established has become this holiday provision, that not only the applicants are ministered to, but the highways and byways are searched by the well wishers, lest some deserving one, too proud or too sensitive to ask, be overlooked.

In truth, this holiday feast has come to be something more than a charity of food and clothing and the supplying of bodily wants, it has reached out not only to the poor in purse, but to those who by chance or by choice find themselves on the other side of the pale that separates society into two great classes.

But, while the ultimate aim of the Christian organizations is to reach the deserving poor and needy and to succor them, it has come to that understanding when no particular stress is laid on the word "deserving." It is enough to know that the family is needy and that it will

not have the necessaries unless given to it, and then the Christian charity takes hold and affords relief. As a rule, this relief takes the form of eatables and wearables, but often it becomes more practical.

has been demonstrated beyond doubt that a certain percentage of the habitual indigent are beyond redemption in this regard, but that doesn't relieve humanity of responsibility for their care. Another of the



DINNER BASKETS AT SALVATION ARMY STORE, READY TO GIVE TO THE PEOPLE NEEDING CHRISTMAS DINNER—Photo by a Staff Artist.

Charity workers who have studied the question from the standpoint of actual experience, have almost despaired of doing any permanent good for the poor. It

points that must be given consideration is how to reach those who will help themselves, but are so situated as to be unable to do so. These people as a rule conceal

their necessities until the very last, their pride withholding them from applying for the assistance that is waiting for them. On the other hand, the unworthy or undeserving, are the ones who generally push the fastest to secure assistance of a nature that will relieve them from the necessity of putting forth any effort. All attempts to distinguish by hard and fast rules between these classes have been failures, but organized charity has been enabled to exercise some discretion in dealing with them.

One of the best examples of organized charity work known to modern times is that of the Salvation army. It has its distinctly religious aspect, but this is secondary to its work of relief. The original platform of General Booth was "Soup, soap and salvation." He would first feed the man, then cleanse him externally and finally renovate him internally if possible. But he never denies him food. Working along these lines and making its headquarters among the submerged millions, the Salvation army has become the greatest agency of the sort probably that the world has ever known. It goes among the ones it seeks to reach; its active members come from the classes that can only be reached by such means as it exercises, and it is therefore peculiarly fitted to get at the cases it deals with. Knowledge that the other church organizations cannot obtain is daily afforded the Salvation army and it moves with definite information wherever it sets about an expedition of relief or errand of mercy.

For many days before Christmas the lassies of the Army stood on the public streets, soliciting in their unobtrusive but effectual way contributions to be devoted to the purpose of providing Christmas dinners for the poor. One of the considerate methods of the Army is shown in the fact that it is so arranged that the family should not be disturbed on that day, but that the dinner should be eaten at the

home, wherever it was. A store room was rented down town, where the supplies were concentrated and the provisions divided into "dinner" lots, enough being placed in each basket to provide a substantial meal of the season's provender for each average family. While the provisions were being gathered, other workers of the Army were looking up the people who would need to be given a dinner on Christmas, and providing them with tickets that would entitle them to a basket or whatever relief was needed. How this was taken advantage of is shown in the photographs made by The Bee staff artist at the store room on the day before Christmas.

Aids to Memory

"When I was out west a few weeks ago I ran across a couple of fellows that used to live here. Do you remember Billover, who had a lunch counter around the corner here some time in '97?"

"Yes, I remember Billover. I lent him \$5 once and he never paid it."

"That's the same man. He never paid anybody. Well, he's in partnership now with Skimbridge, who used to keep a hardware store in the next block. Remember Skimbridge?"

"No, I've forgotten him. I guess he never borrowed any money of me."—Chicago Tribune.

A Misfortune

He had been telling the thrilling story of his escape.

"So the automobile got beyond control?" she remarked.

"Ya-as," he replied.

"And was wrecked?"

"Ya-as."

"But you escaped injury?"

"Oh, ya-as."

"Seems too bad, doesn't it?"—Chicago Post.



COUNCILMEN O'BRIEN AND DYBALL DELIVERING THE CHRISTMAS CANDY TO THE STENOGRAPHERS EMPLOYED AT THE CITY HALL—CITY CLERK ELBOURN IN BACKGROUND—Photo by a Staff Artist.